

## THE *MEUSEURAYA* CULTURE IN AGRICULTURE: A CASE STUDY IN REUSEB VILLAGE, PIDIE JAYA

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### ABSTRAK

This study aims to explore the cultural practice of *Meuseuraya* (mutual cooperation) in Desa Reuseb, Kecamatan Trienggadeng, Kabupaten Pidie Jaya, analyzing its evolution from a cornerstone of community engagement to its present-day decline amidst modernization and technological advancements. Employing qualitative research methods, this study collected data through interviews, observation, and documentation in Desa Reuseb. Informants, including local leaders and community members, were selected using purposive sampling. The data was then analyzed using qualitative descriptive techniques, focusing on the interactive model of analysis. Historically, *Meuseuraya* played a vital role in fostering community spirit and cooperation in agricultural and social activities within Desa Reuseb. It was integral to community bonding and supported various communal tasks, such as building infrastructure and farming. However, the study reveals a significant decline in the practice due to modernization, technological adoption in agriculture, and changing lifestyle preferences among the community. The fading practice of *Meuseuraya* represents a loss of cultural heritage and community spirit in the face of modern challenges. Despite these changes, the values underlying *Meuseuraya* remain crucial for fostering community solidarity and identity. This study concludes that revitalizing and adapting *Meuseuraya* to contemporary conditions could help preserve its cultural significance and enhance community resilience and sustainability. Future initiatives should focus on integrating traditional cooperation techniques with modern agricultural practices to maintain the relevance and benefits of *Meuseuraya* in current and future generations.

**Keywords:** *Meuseuraya*, mutual cooperation, cultural heritage, modernization

### ABSTRAK

Artikel Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi praktik budaya *Meuseuraya* (kerja sama gotong royong) di Desa Reuseb, Kecamatan Trienggadeng, Kabupaten Pidie Jaya, menganalisis evolusinya dari menjadi pilar keterlibatan komunitas hingga penurunannya di masa kini di tengah modernisasi dan kemajuan teknologi. Menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif, studi ini mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi di Desa Reuseb. Informan, termasuk pemimpin lokal dan anggota komunitas, dipilih menggunakan teknik sampling purposif. Data kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik deskriptif kualitatif, berfokus pada model analisis interaktif. Secara historis, *Meuseuraya* memainkan peran vital dalam memupuk semangat komunitas dan kerja sama dalam kegiatan pertanian dan sosial di Desa Reuseb. Ini integral untuk pengikatan komunitas dan mendukung berbagai tugas komunal, seperti pembangunan infrastruktur dan pertanian. Namun, penelitian ini mengungkapkan penurunan signifikan dalam praktik ini karena modernisasi, adopsi teknologi dalam pertanian, dan perubahan preferensi gaya hidup di antara komunitas. Pudarnya praktik *Meuseuraya* mewakili kehilangan warisan budaya dan semangat komunitas di hadapan tantangan modern. Meskipun terjadi perubahan ini, nilai-nilai yang mendasari *Meuseuraya* tetap penting untuk mendorong solidaritas dan identitas komunitas. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa merevitalisasi dan menyesuaikan *Meuseuraya* dengan kondisi kontemporer dapat membantu melestarikan signifikansi budayanya dan meningkatkan ketahanan dan keberlanjutan komunitas. Inisiatif di masa depan harus fokus pada integrasi teknik kerja sama tradisional

dengan praktik pertanian modern untuk mempertahankan relevansi dan manfaat *Meuseuraya* bagi generasi saat ini dan mendatang.

**Kata Kunci:** *Meuseuraya*, gotong royong, warisan budaya, modernisasi

## Introduction

*Meuseuraya* culture, often known as mutual cooperation, is a crucial value in Indonesian society. This concept emphasizes teamwork, solidarity, and mutual assistance among community members in daily life. In the context of mutual cooperation culture (Syahrul Mustofa, Halikin 2019:6), Indonesians tend to work together to achieve common goals without expecting direct rewards. Mutual cooperation activities can be seen in various forms, from cleaning the environment to building infrastructure and assisting neighbors in need.

In rural areas, for example, the culture of mutual cooperation is often seen in activities such as renovating houses, plowing fields together, or holding religious or other social events. Although the social dynamics in urban areas may differ, the spirit of mutual cooperation is maintained through environmental cleanup activities, social activities, or other humanitarian efforts (Soekanto 2007). This culture is also reflected in various local customs and cultural traditions across Indonesia, such as in traditional marriage ceremonies, customary rituals, or cultural festivals, where community members help each other prepare for the events.

*Meuseuraya*, as a cultural practice, is not merely a physical activity; it also reflects strong social relationships among community members. It strengthens feelings of solidarity and togetherness and builds robust social bonds among them. By preserving the culture of mutual cooperation, Indonesia upholds values of togetherness, mutual respect, and care, which are crucial foundations for building a fair, harmonious, and sustainable society (Fazal and Saleh 2022).

However, although the mutual cooperation culture is still well-preserved in some villages like Desa Reuseb, Kecamatan Trienggadeng, Kabupaten Pidie Jaya, the practice of *Meuseuraya* in daily life is increasingly minimal. Previously, *Meuseuraya* was not only considered a common activity but also one of the main foundations in uniting community elements in the struggle for Indonesian independence (Inna Agustina 2015:1). Over time, people tend to turn to external services rather than engage in *Meuseuraya*, especially with the advancement of technology and the availability of modern agricultural machinery that reduces the need for communal cooperation.

*Meuseuraya* is primarily related to agricultural activities, from plowing fields to harvesting crops. However, changes in lifestyle and the influence of modernization have shifted community priorities, so *Meuseuraya* is no longer prioritized. The importance of *Meuseuraya* as part of the cultural heritage of Aceh and Indonesia should not be overlooked. In the article by K.S. Maifianti, S. Sarwoprasodjo, and D. Sunsanto titled "Communication Ritual Khanduri Blang as a Form of Community Togetherness," it is explained that Khanduri Blang is a traditional custom of the farming community in Aceh passed down through generations that indirectly can enhance rice production (Maifianti, K.S. Sarwoprasodjo, S. Susanto 2014:52).

Furthermore, it is also explained in the writings of Mustafa Abu Bakar titled "Local Wisdom as the Basis of Character Education" (Mustafa Abu Bakar 2016:76) and emphasized in Inna Agustina's writings about the Values of Mutual Cooperation in the Top Pade Dance, stating that mutual cooperation or *Meuseuraya* in Acehese culture can be seen as a value system underpinning a habit of helping each other (Inna Agustina 2015). Therefore, a deep understanding of the causes and impacts of the loss of this practice, along with strategic steps to support the revitalization of agricultural culture and ensure the future sustainability of agriculture and local communities, is necessary (Fitriana and Ketaren 2022). Thus, a strong

foundation for sustainable and harmonious community life will be created, where the values of mutual cooperation remain an irreplaceable foundation.

## Methods

This study was conducted in Desa Reuseb, Kecamatan Trienggadeng, Kabupaten Pidie Jaya, using a qualitative method. Informants in the study were selected using purposive sampling techniques, where samples were deliberately chosen by the researcher (J.R Ranco 2010). The subjects of this study included the Head of Desa Reuseb, Religious Leaders (Tuha Peut), Community Leaders, and the local community in Desa Reuseb. To gather research data, techniques such as interviews, observation, and documentation were employed. The interview process was conducted directly with informants by asking questions related to aspects of *Meuseuraya*. Observations were made by the researcher actively participating and observing *Meuseuraya* farming activities in Desa Reuseb, Pidie Jaya. Documentation involved searching for written sources related to *Meuseuraya*, from both books and relevant scientific journals. After the data was collected, the researcher performed data analysis using qualitative descriptive techniques with an interactive analysis model (Sugiyono 2015). This analysis model involves data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and the drawing of conclusions/verification repeatedly until the data obtained is truly valid and accountable.

## Results And Discussion

### *Meuseuraya: from the Past to Present*

Aceh has a figure known for introducing *Meuseuraya*, named Habib Samalanga, a cleric who lived in East Aceh in the 19th century. According to historical records by Cristian Snouck Hurgronje (Snouck Hurgronje 1980:187), Habib Samalanga is recognized as a reformist cleric with significant influence. He is renowned for his efforts in teaching religious values to the Acehnese people, particularly the importance of performing prayers and integrating religious practices into daily activities. Habib Samalanga encouraged the spirit of mutual cooperation, or *Meuseuraya*, among the community, hoping that they would work together on beneficial tasks for the public interest, reflecting the spirit of mutual cooperation inherent in Acehnese culture (Munawiah 2008). He is not only known for successfully building a mosque participatively with the community through *Meuseuraya* but also for coordinating the construction of roads and bridges with a mutual cooperation approach (Gurniwa Kamil Pasya 2000).

On the west coast of Aceh, there is another cleric figure known for mobilizing the community in mutual cooperation practices, namely Teungku Putik in Nagan Raya. Teungku Putik, whose real name is the same as his grandfather's, Teungku Abdur Rahim, is a well-known cleric in the area who practiced the spirit of mutual cooperation or *Meuseuraya* (Falita Alam 2011). He was a persistent figure in motivating the community to overcome various significant problems of the people that did not align with Islamic values. With strong determination, he endeavored to align Islamic teachings with the local customs and habits of the local community (Snouck Hurgronje 1980). In the Seunagan area, particularly in Nagan Raya, a mosque already existed, but he encouraged the local community to build a new mosque using the *Meuseuraya* approach. The mosque construction was carried out through mutual cooperation by the entire community, with work patterns organized on a weekly rotation.

Additionally, he also worked to improve the economy of the Nagan Raya community together by engaging in mutual cooperation with rice farmers in the fields by constructing four neulop (irrigation systems) with water channels (lhueng ie). The first neulop successfully built with the cooperation of the city government spans 16 kilometers. The second neulop was constructed together with the community over 10 kilometers. And in the third year of work in 1882, it spanned 15 kilometers. This was followed by the construction of the fourth neulop over

8 kilometers. The *Meuseuraya* culture opened and built roads and irrigation during two periods; the first period was before the Dutch launched attacks on the Seunagan area, while the second period occurred after the Dutch controlled the area. During the implementation of these *Meuseuraya* activities, the community competed to donate their possessions, such as buffalo, goats, rice, and others.

Those participating in *Meuseuraya* truly felt it as a festive work. Almost every day, up to three buffalos were slaughtered to feed the community engaged in *Meuseuraya*. Before Teungku Putik completed the *Meuseuraya* work with the Senagan community, the Aceh War with the Dutch erupted at the center of the Banda Aceh kingdom between 1873 and 1874. Following Indonesian independence, on the east coast of Aceh since 1963, or precisely a year after rejoining the Republic of Indonesia, Teungku Daud Beureueh revitalized *Meuseuraya* in Pidie. The projects he built with the community through *Meuseuraya* included road segments, bridges, digging new irrigation channels, and repairing old irrigation channels.

*Meuseuraya* serves as a concrete example of how a cleric can inspire the spirit of mutual cooperation based on solidarity and common interest beyond kinship ties. Teungku Muhammad Daud Beureueh, together with the Pidie community, led the construction of road segments and irrigation systems that transformed their area. From building a 6-kilometer road segment in Beureunuen to a 5-kilometer segment from Simpang Lhee to the student village in Tijue, as well as a 5-kilometer segment from Teupin Raya to Glumpang Tiga, and the longest, a 12-kilometer segment from Lampoh Saka to Langkawi Kembang Tanjong Pidie, all these are tangible proofs of how the spirit of *Meuseuraya* remains alive, realizing sustainable development for community welfare. The success of *Meuseuraya* in irrigation development also became a reality thanks to the efforts of Teungku Daud Beureueh and the active participation of the Pidie community. One such example is the construction of the Lueng Bintang irrigation system, spanning 45 kilometers from Keumala to Gigieng. Furthermore, Teungku Daud Beureueh also succeeded in motivating the *Meuseuraya* spirit in the capital of Pidie district, Sigli. There, they successfully relocated a river that split the city by digging a canal 330 meters long, avoiding water congestion and foul odors caused by trash. This action not only reflects dedication to development but also creativity in solving complex problems for the common good.

During the implementation of *Meuseuraya*, Teungku Daud Beureueh not only devoted his time but also stayed in Sigli for 40 days to complete this community project. His leadership in *Meuseuraya* was not limited to physical construction but also encompassed the fundamental values of religious teachings and the tolerance that grew from local culture. According to Mr. Wahyu Muddin, aged 26, the Village Secretary of Desa Reuseb, he said:

The practice of *Meuseuraya* becomes a social ritual that unites the Muslim community in the area. One example of *Meuseuraya* practice is the farming culture, where the community blends in social activities to help each other without expecting material rewards. More than just a physical project, *Meuseuraya* becomes a symbol of sincerity and inner satisfaction in living together, strengthened by the belief in rewards from Allah SWT. (interview with Mr. Wahyu Muddin, aged 26, Village Secretary of Desa Reuseb, on November 11, 2022).

In the past, the *Meuseuraya* culture had a very strong influence on the daily life of the community, especially in farming practices. In the 1990s, this culture was still very palpable in the community. According to Teungku Imum of Desa Reuseb, Teungku Usman Affan stated:

Before entering the rice planting season (Tren U Blang), the community undertook a series of traditions that have existed since ancient times. The ritual begins with khanduri kandang (opening the stable) where a buffalo is slaughtered together to be eaten in a communal atmosphere. After that, the process of plowing the fields begins with the help of buffaloes (keubeu), a practice commonly performed in the past. After khanduri

kandang (buffalo khanduri), the community engages in mutual cooperation, usually involving irrigation up to the water channels in the rice fields. After these mutual cooperation activities are ready, the community usually begins cleaning the rice seeds and scattering them in their respective fields, typically only requiring a very small area of paddy field according to the existing land size. He further stated that on the day before sowing the rice seeds, the community would hold a khanduri cooking porridge together in meunasah (wet ibue), where this khanduri usually also uses glutinous rice (bulukat), both are allowed in this khanduri. (interview with Teungku Imum of Desa Reuseb, Teungku Usman Affan)

After the rice seeds grow and it is time to plant them, another khanduri will be held, khanduri tren sumula (khanduri going down to the fields). According to Mr. Teuku Muhammad Usman, a retired civil servant in the community of Desa Reuseb, he said:

This khanduri usually only involves bringing rice along with side dishes to the Balee Blang lesehan (balee located in the middle of the field) that has been made by the village, and there the community will gather. Before eating the rice, it will be preceded by a prayer recitation by the teugku imum of the village because the rice field balee was made very close to the graves (Jeurat), only then the food is distributed back and eaten together. During the rice planting (sumula), it is usually done together and continuously repeated with other community members. Rice planting is usually done with 2-3 stalks for a neater appearance, often a string is also pulled as a boundary for rice planting. Typically, the age of seeds ready for planting is two weeks after sowing or at the age of 15-20 days old seeds. (interview with Mr. Teuku Muhammad Usman, aged 80, a retired civil servant, community member of Desa Reuseb, on October 12, 2022).

After the planting is all ready, just waiting for the khanduri Keubeu (buffalo feast), the buffalo feast takes place when the rice begins to fruit (dara padee). At this feast, a buffalo will be slaughtered, marking the end of a series of activities conducted by the Reuseb community. After everyone finishes eating, teugku imum will then sprinkle the fields with medicinal water (ie ubat) which has been recited with verses from the Quran, prayers, or fresh water (banyu tawar), after which the water is carried to be sprinkled (peusujuk pade). After sprinkling the medicinal water, the community is usually not allowed to go to the fields for 3 days, a practice that has existed for a long time and has been performed generationally to this day. According to Teuku Usman Affan, a member of Tuha Peut, when the rice turns yellow and is ripe and ready for harvest, the community of the past would cut it using a sickle (sadeup), and after being cut, it is placed on rice stalks so that the rice can dry and lighten. When collected to take just the rice. During the rice cutting, usually in one naleh 4-5 people participate in cutting, taking a considerable amount of time, around 1 and a half to 2 days. With the end of all these activities, thereafter no more activities are conducted, only to be done again when the rice planting season is about to begin again. In a year, the rice planting season usually only occurs twice (dua goe meu ue). When the rice planting season is about to arrive again, a general meeting will be held by the village apparatus and attended by community members who own rice fields. (interview with Teungku Imum of Desa Reuseb, Teungku Usman Affan).

### ***Meuseuraya* as a Symbol of Harmony and Social Change**

Budaya Mutual cooperation remains a strong pillar in the lives of Indonesian communities (Bintarto 1980:10). Within a community, interdependence among individuals is crucial, with many social aspects requiring the help of others to resolve various issues. Preserving the culture of mutual cooperation safeguards a precious heritage, as cultural values are an integral part of a community's identity (Department of Education and Culture 1979:115). In the context of Aceh, the concept of mutual cooperation, known as *Meuseuraya*, reflects the

spirit of collaboration in daily activities. While it is more commonly found in villages, this culture is still present in some areas near cities, such as Banda Aceh, although it may not be as strong as in the villages. Yet, the presence of this traditional culture still adds color and richness to community life (Darwis A. Soelaiman (ed) 2003:33).

In reality, there is no difference between mutual cooperation and *Meuseuraya*, but both have undergone acculturation with Acehnese customs. In the understanding of the community, *Meuseuraya* or mutual cooperation is a form of collaboration carried out to achieve a desired result. However, in today's reality, the practice of *Meuseuraya* is increasingly rare, with people preferring to use the services of others rather than engaging in mutual cooperation. In the past, the practice of *Meuseuraya* has proven its effectiveness in uniting the nation, especially in the struggle for Indonesian independence. *Meuseuraya* became the backbone of national unity, where citizens, the military, and political fighters worked together to expel colonizers from the homeland. Thus, *Meuseuraya* or mutual cooperation is not just a tradition but a strong foundation in uniting the elements of the Indonesian nation.

*Meuseuraya* has become an inseparable part of the lives of the community in Desa Reuseb, Kecamatan Trienggadeng, Kabupaten Pidie Jaya. Almost all aspects of their life involve *Meuseuraya* practices, from plowing fields, planting rice, to harvesting the crops. These activities are carried out through mutual cooperation, with tasks divided progressively and in rotation. *Meuseuraya* is not just a routine but a cooperative attitude that allows work to be completed quickly and efficiently. However, over time, various changes have occurred, and the community has been driven to abandon the practice of *Meuseuraya*. It is not the fault of modernization, but rather how the community faces and adapts to these changes. The use of agricultural machinery has replaced the role of *Meuseuraya* in various activities, leaving new challenges for the community that must adapt to these changes.

*Meuseuraya* is not just an ordinary routine, but a culture that should be held high by every community. Through the practice of *Meuseuraya*, the community not only completes tasks together but also strengthens relationships and creates peace within a gampong. However, as seen in the case of agriculture in Desa Reuseb, Kecamatan Trienggadeng, Kabupaten Pidie Jaya, there is a loss of the mutual cooperation culture in various activities, including in farming. *Meuseuraya*, known in Acehnese as mutual cooperation, is becoming increasingly rare amidst changing times. In this study, the use of the term *Meuseuraya* to refer to mutual cooperation in Aceh is a recognition of the importance of this culture in community life, an integral part of local identity or local wisdom.

Agriculture has been a backbone for communities around the world, especially in Desa Reuseb, Trienggadeng, Pidie Jaya. The fertile potential in agriculture makes it the main source of livelihood for local residents. However, lately, interest and attention to agricultural culture have been declining. This phenomenon not only affects economically but also has a broad impact on the environment and the sustainability of local communities. Urbanization, modernization, climate change, and government policies that do not support traditional agriculture also contribute to shifting the roles and cultural values of agriculture among the community. The loss of the *Meuseuraya* agricultural culture, especially in Desa Reuseb, Trienggadeng, is a serious concern that requires strategic steps to address the problem. Through further research, a deeper understanding of the causes and impacts of the loss of this agricultural culture can provide a basis for formulating effective steps to support the revitalization of agricultural culture and ensure the future sustainability of agriculture and the welfare of local communities.

### **The Fading Culture of *Meuseuraya* in Desa Reuseb, Pidie Jaya**

The loss of a culture has significant impacts on society, particularly in Desa Reuseb, Kecamatan Trienggadeng, Kabupaten Pidie Jaya. Traditions and cultures once firmly preserved

are now vanishing, eroded by the strong currents of globalization. Unexpected cultural changes accompany the advancement of the times, even affecting traditional activities like *Meuseuraya*, the local farming system. According to Mrs. Salamah, a resident of Desa Reuseb, the cultural shift in farming activities is starkly different from the past. Many activities have disappeared; things that were once common practice are now hard to find in the farming processes of Desa Reuseb. For instance, plowing, which used to rely solely on buffalo-drawn implements, now utilizes mini tractors (large contractors). (Interview with Mrs. Salamah, (77 years old), a resident of Desa Reuseb, on October 25, 2022).

Additionally, there are now machines that can cut rice quickly and easily within just 1 to 2 hours, ready to be taken home. This contrasts sharply with the traditional methods that took up to two days, where farmers used scythes (*sadeup*) to cut the rice, then sunned it for a day to dry. After that, the rice could be gathered and taken to a collective pile. This transformation not only offers greater efficiency but also marks a shift in work patterns and social interactions among farmers. The rice harvesting process in Desa Reuseb does not end simply after the rice is harvested and taken home. The next day, the rice is separated from the stalks in a process called "*ceumeulho*." A mini rice threshing machine helps in the cleaning process, involving 6-7 farmers in one job. Yet, the activity does not stop there. After the rice is clean and piled in the field to sun, the drying process continues until the rice is completely dry and moisture-free, enhancing its storage durability.

The dried rice is then weighed for zakat distribution, which varies depending on the harvest outcome. If the harvest is above average, the zakat amount will also be larger than usual. Mrs. Andian, a housewife from Desa Reuseb, states:

The zakat distribution process is directly managed by the Teungku Imum Gampong, who oversees the distribution at Meunasah. Farmers are called by name to come and collect the zakat in sacks. (Interview with Mrs. Andian, 78 years old, IRT, a resident of Desa Reuseb, on October 28, 2022)

The zakat distribution typically follows the established Sharia, covering eight entitled groups: the poor, the needy, zakat collectors, new converts, slaves, debtors, those in the cause of Allah (*fisabilillah*), and travelers (Firdaningsih, Wahyudi, and Hakim 2019). Mrs. Afriyanti, who works as a private employee, comments:

As we know, this culture has been practiced from generation to generation, ensuring its presence up to the present. Previously, the community greatly valued *Meuseuraya* in farming, but now, this practice in agriculture has disappeared without any party working to revive the *Meuseuraya* culture, especially in Desa Reuseb, Kecamatan Trienggadeng, Kabupaten Pidie Jaya. (Interview with Mrs. Afriyanti, (24 years old), a private employee, a resident of Desa Reuseb, on October 9, 2022).

Cooperation like the *Meuseuraya* culture is a concrete form of the social system in the lives of the Aceh community. The *Meuseuraya* cooperation model will fade and disappear if the spirit of cooperation declines and tasks are no longer performed voluntarily but instead with material and monetary expectations as compensation for effort sacrificed. Therefore, as the nature of cooperation fades into a service where people consistently expect material and monetary compensation, the essence of community reciprocity gradually vanishes. Regarding the disappearance of the *Meuseuraya* culture in Desa Reuseb, Mr. Wahyumuddin explains:

There are several other factors causing the rarity of *Meuseuraya* (mutual assistance) activities, resulting from social changes within the community. Social change also arises from social interactions. Other factors prompting the community to abandon the *Meuseuraya* farming culture include dissatisfaction with the current situation and the desire to improve conditions within a village. (Interview with Mr. Wahyumuddin, (26 years old), Village Secretary of Desa Reuseb, on November 11, 2022).

According to Mrs. Afriyanti, there is a perceived deficiency within the culture itself, thus accepting the coming changes. The community's efforts to adapt to needs and conditions emerge in line with the community's growth. (Interview with Mrs. Afriyanti, (24 years old), a private employee, a resident of Desa Reuseb, on October 9, 2022). The community often faces various difficulties that prompt them to overcome these challenges. One key to addressing change is an open attitude towards new things, whether from within or outside the community. Mr. Wahyumuddin explains that besides an open attitude, change can also be seen as a response to advancements around us. This view is reinforced by Soekanto's perspective, stating that social change can be triggered by both internal and external factors of a community. Causes of social change originating from within the community include:

- *Population Increase and Decrease*. Changes in a region's population composition affect not only the number of people living there but also the overall conditions of community life. According to Nanang Martono, an increase in population can change not only the number and distribution of settlements but also land use patterns. Land previously used for agriculture may be repurposed for industrial use, as the increasing human needs surpass its capacity. This impact results in the industry absorbing labor from the agricultural sector, transforming farmers and agricultural workers into industrial workers. This change presents new challenges for the surrounding community, which must adapt to significantly altered environmental conditions.
- *New Discoveries*. New discoveries in cultural elements, whether in the form of tool innovations or ideas created by individuals, significantly impact societal dynamics. The process of discovering, developing, and spreading new cultural elements becomes an integral part of a community's cultural evolution. This new knowledge, once learned and understood, is eventually adopted by the community for daily use. Thus, cultural innovations not only reflect individual creativity but also mark milestones in a group's social development and adaptation.
- *Changes in Lifestyle*. Changes in lifestyle can subsequently affect an individual's attitudes and behaviors. Regarding lifestyle changes within the *Meuseuraya* culture in Desa Reuseb, as expressed by Teuku Muhammad Usman: "The way we live now is no longer the same, leading to changes that push us to keep up with current advancements." Here, Teuku Muhammad Usman explains how current changes in thinking have led the community towards activity changes, such as in rice harvesting processes which were once very manual and time-consuming but now use rice threshing machines that can complete harvesting tasks in just 1-2 hours.

Thus, awareness of changes and adaptation to the dynamics of the times are key in maintaining community continuity amidst various challenges and changes.

## **Conclusion**

The cultural practice of *Meuseuraya*, embodying mutual cooperation and communal effort, has been a cornerstone in the fabric of Aceh and broader Indonesian society. Historically, this practice not only facilitated agricultural activities but also reinforced social bonds and communal identities. The narratives from Desa Reuseb illustrate how *Meuseuraya* once permeated every aspect of community life, from farming to social rituals, fostering a spirit of collaboration and unity. However, the advent of modernization and urbanization has gradually eclipsed traditional practices, leading to a decline in *Meuseuraya* activities. This shift, influenced by technological advancements and changing lifestyles, underscores a broader transformation within the community, reflecting a move away from collective labor towards more individualized, mechanized methods. Despite these changes, the essence of *Meuseuraya*—as a symbol of cooperation and communal support—remains a crucial element



of cultural heritage that merits preservation. To sustain this rich cultural legacy and adapt it to contemporary realities, it is essential to cultivate awareness and appreciation of *Meuseuraya* among younger generations. Furthermore, integrating traditional practices with modern agricultural techniques could provide a balanced approach, ensuring the survival and relevance of *Meuseuraya*. By acknowledging its historical significance and adapting to the evolving socio-economic landscape, communities like Desa Reuseb can continue to benefit from the values of mutual cooperation, thus maintaining harmony and resilience in the face of ongoing social transformations.

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